



### CHFS Focus Employee Spotlight: Rob Hester – Working to ensure quality day care in Kentucky

“Is this how I want my children to be treated?” That’s the standard Rob Hester, director of the Division of Regulated Child Care in the Office of Inspector General, asks his staff to apply to every aspect of its work.

With the responsibility for certifying 1,132 homes and licensing 2,283 day care facilities, 92 child-placing agencies and 79 group homes throughout Kentucky, the 75 staff members have frequent opportunities to apply that standard. The day care facilities alone have the capacity to provide care for 170,091 children.

While Hester is relatively new to day care and state government, he is no stranger to health care, having worked in the industry for over 26 years. He first became interested in hospital administration through his uncle, who ran the hospital in Lancaster.

In 1979 he accepted his first job in the industry as administrator of Johnson Mathers Health Care, Inc. in Carlisle. After 11 years there, he was named CEO of Jane Todd Crawford Hospital in Greensburg.

His experience in hospital administration prepared him well to become the senior executive director of Green Hill Manor Nursing Facility in 1993. He held that position for the next nine years, until he was recruited by Kindred Healthcare to oversee the Lexington Centre for Health and Rehabilitation as it emerged from decertification.

“OIG is very fortunate to have someone of Rob Hester’s caliber. He has a wealth of administrative and managerial experience,” said Inspector General Robert J. Benvenuti, III. “There is no question the division has taken great strides under his leadership.”

Hester’s work ethic and values are built on the example set by his father who was always a very hard worker and who instilled in him that “when you leave a place, either a job or a town, depart knowing that it’s better off than when you first arrived.”

Feeling positive about the work he had done in the health care industry, Hester decided that it was time to put what he’d learned in private industry to use in the public sector. “I felt very positive about the new administration and

wanted to be a part of it. I believed I had the management skills necessary to be a useful addition to the administration and I wanted to perform public service after being in the private sector for so long,” said Hester.

“I’m very pleased with the professionals that I’ve encountered in this division, both Central Office and regional personnel. They want to do the job, do it right the first time – every time, and continue to raise the level of professionalism,” he said.

As a result, one of Hester’s primary goals is staff member training. He thinks good training is imperative to attracting and retaining quality staff. Since Hester became division director, all Regulated Child Care employees have been cross-trained in taking complaints.

“We don’t want anyone put off and not have their concerns addressed. Public opinion indicates that this is one of our primary concerns,” explains Hester. “If whoever answered the telephone when someone called in with a complaint couldn’t provide immediate assistance, it’s tantamount to calling 911 and being put on hold. So, we’ve ensured that this won’t happen because it’s simply unacceptable.”

Hester characterizes OIG as a good place to work. “I feel like I came into a good situation. There are still a lot of things I want to do, but overall there’s a great atmosphere in OIG with a wonderful group of people who primarily believe that our goal is compliance and safety. We are extremely fortunate to have dedicated individuals.”

In addition, he has nothing but praise for OIG’s upper-level management. “Inspector General Robert J. Benvenuti, III is a terrific manager. He really knows how to use his employees’ skills to the best advantage and he’s very supportive of us,” said Hester. Deputy IG Steve Davis also earns accolades. “Steve’s legal experience is invaluable, and his ability to examine situations from all angles helps us to prepare our Adverse Action cases much more completely.”

When he’s not busy keeping children safe in Kentucky child care facilities, Hester likes to play golf and read. His current literary pick is *Eats Shoots and Leaves*. He lives in Lexington with his wife of 29 years, Betty, who is a teacher. They have two children, 24-year-old Lauren and 21-year-old Michael.

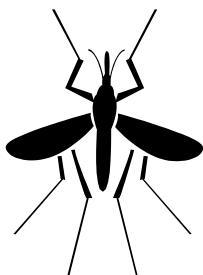


## CHFS Focus Program Spotlight: West Nile Virus Surveillance Program

*Keeping careful watch over the Commonwealth*

By Barbara Fox

West Nile virus is a potentially serious illness that is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. The Department for Public Health (DPH) West Nile Virus surveillance program monitors West Nile activity throughout the state as Kentucky enters its fifth surveillance season for the virus.



West Nile virus was first detected in the West Nile District of Uganda in 1937. It has been found sporadically since in humans, birds and other vertebrate animals in Africa, Eastern Europe, West Asia and the Middle East. First reported in the United States in 1999 in New York City, West Nile has since been found in 47 states and the District of Columbia. It was first detected in Kentucky in 2001.

The virus is capable of causing fatal neurological disease such as encephalitis in humans and horses, and mortality in certain wild bird species. The risk of infection is low and most people exposed will not show any symptoms. However, mild symptoms may include slight fever and/or headache, possibly with skin rash and swollen lymph glands. A rapid onset of high fever with head and body aches, neck stiffness, disorientation, stupor and muscle weakness marks more severe infections. Those who may be most at risk are persons over the age of 50 and those with compromised immune systems.

Mike Schardein, an environmental biologist with DPH, serves as the coordinator for the state's West Nile Virus Surveillance Program. He has a master of science degree in aquaculture from Kentucky State University, with research studies focusing on the production of aquaculture species such as paddlefish.

Schardein said that this position is a perfect match for him. "I have always had a special interest in both entomology and diseases which are zoonotic, or capable of being transmitted to humans by animals."

DPH Commissioner William Hacker, M.D., said, "The summer season is here and with it the need for Kentuckians to protect themselves from mosquito bites that could result in illness. Last year was a mild season for West Nile infection in the state, but it's still important to

keep up simple precautions such as wearing insect repellent and reducing standing water around your property."

This year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has added to its recommended arsenal of products that fight the bite. In past years, the CDC had recommended repellents containing the chemical DEET. The CDC continues to say that DEET is most effective, but CDC experts have added two others to its list of recommended repellents – picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus.

Picaridin has long been used in other countries and is an ingredient in at least one repellent sold in the United States. Oil of lemon eucalyptus has long been sold in a variety of sprays and lotions. According to the CDC, oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under three years old.

The West Nile Virus surveillance program at DPH works in close collaboration with several agencies. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture and the Kentucky Mosquito Vector Control programs conduct spraying for mosquitoes at the request of local governments and health departments. They also conduct studies on mosquito control in residential areas with assistance from the University of Kentucky's Entomology Division.

Further information on West Nile virus is available on the DPH Web site at <http://chfs.ky.gov/deph/epi/westnile/> on the CDC Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile>.

## Wellness Wednesday Lunch and Learn: Protect your back from injury

The Lunch and Learn session scheduled for Wednesday, June 22, will feature information on protecting yourself from back injury. The session begins at noon in the CHR Building cafeteria.



If you've ever had a back injury or back pain, you'll want to attend Wednesday's Lunch and Learn session. The Lunch and Learn featured speaker will be Sandra Brock, CHFS Executive Officer for Human Services. Brock is a licensed occupational therapist who will provide information on how to prevent back pain by demonstrating safe ways to lift and perform daily activities.

Lunch and Learn is sponsored by the Cabinet's wellness committee.



## CHFS Health Tip of the Week: Take time for dad's health

By Anne Parr, R.N.

Don't stop thinking of what you can do for dad once Father's Day is over. Encourage him and other men in your life to take care of themselves all year long. You can work to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys by suggesting ideas to help improve health and manage weight. For example:



- **Take your dad to a community health fair.** Many health fairs, sponsored by national health organizations or community groups, offer free health screenings that check cholesterol, blood pressure, bone density and more. Your local newspaper, hospital or clinic can provide information on upcoming fairs.
- **Remind your dad to schedule regular checkups.** Your father's physician can screen and treat common health conditions that affect men, such as prostate cancer, colorectal cancer and cardiovascular disease. Regular checkups help your dad's doctor monitor changes in his condition and ensure your dad's health is on the right track.
- **Become a kid again.** Remember when you begged your dad to play catch with you in the backyard? Encourage your dad to exercise again because being overweight or obese can increase his risk of diseases such as diabetes and cancer. Choose something your dad likes to do, and aim to do it with him a few days a week.

## Visually impaired Kentuckians now have access to local news statewide

Contact:  
Kitty Armstrong McAllister,  
Kentucky Education Cabinet  
(502) 564-6606, ext. 146



NFB-NEWSLINE, an electronic system for visually-impaired or disabled Kentuckians, now offers access to 10 newspapers across the state by using a touch-tone telephone and toll-free number. Originally, Kentuckians using this service were able to access the Lexington Herald-Leader and the Louisville Courier-Journal newspapers, as well as more than 150 other out-of-

state newspapers and three magazines. Now, eight more newspapers across Kentucky have been added, expanding coverage of local news.

In a news conference last February, Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a contract between the state and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) for the NFB-NEWSLINE service. As a result of the contract, two daily newspapers were added each month to the service, giving users access to 10 Kentucky newspapers within four months.

Newspapers participating in Kentucky include: The Kentucky Post, Covington; The Paducah Sun, Paducah; Corbin Times-Tribune, Corbin; Kentucky New Era, Hopkinsville; Appalachian News-Express, Pikeville; Bowling Green Daily News, Bowling Green; Maysville Ledger Independent, Maysville; Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro; The Courier-Journal, Louisville; and The Herald Leader, Lexington.

"This free information system now offers visually-impaired Kentuckians access to their local and regional newspapers through an easy-to-use 24-hour service," said Governor Fletcher.

"NFB-NEWSLINE gives people who are disabled or visually impaired the news without delay so that everyone can be informed about what's happening in their communities at the same time. When people have timely information they can better participate in discussions at their work, school, social functions and public meetings," Fletcher continued.

"For many Kentuckians who have been unable to read news print due to visual impairments or other disabilities, NFB-NEWSLINE now provides daily access to both local and state news. The inclusion through these media services provides a new avenue for community connection," said Department for Workforce Investment Commissioner Laura E. Owens.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, more than 253,000 Kentuckians have difficulty seeing words in newspaper print. The contract with the NFB is the result of House Bill 262, sponsored by Rep. Susan Westrom, and Senate Bill 56, sponsored Senator Tom Buford, passed by the Kentucky General Assembly during the 2004 session. Currently, 38 states are participating in the service.

Kentuckians who are eligible can subscribe to this free service by filling out an application from the NFB which is available online at <http://www.nfb.org/newsline1.htm>. Assistance is also available by contacting Pamela Roark-Glisson, NFB-NEWSLINE coordinator for Kentucky, at





859-266-2807 in Lexington or toll-free at 1-877-266-2807. Subscribers then receive an identification number and security code that they use when they call NFB-NEWSLINE at 1-888-882-1629.

"NFB-NEWSLINE makes it possible for those of us who are blind to access news and information at the same time as our sighted peers," said James Gashel, executive director of strategic initiatives for the NFB. "Most importantly, it gives us the freedom to choose which articles we want to read and when we want to read them. Staying informed and involved in our communities is what allows us to reach our full potential."

Subscribers can choose from today's newspaper, yesterday's newspaper or the Sunday edition and then choose the section or article by using a standard touch-tone telephone. The menu allows the user to change the speed and voice quality, spell out words or search for a particular word or subject. In addition to newspapers, the NFB-NEWSLINE lets users select a local information channel that tells about other services for people who are visually impaired.

With 10 daily newspapers, Kentucky will have the most daily newspapers available on NFB-NEWSLINE than any other surrounding state except for Ohio, which has 14.

The contract between the Kentucky Education Cabinet and NFB is for one year. The Cabinet's Office for the Blind is responsible for managing the program in Kentucky.

**Be accountable for your actions and their results.** Being a victim is suppressive. Blaming yourself or others doesn't let you move forward. Get past these feelings to make positive changes.

**Intend to be happy.** Once you have made the conscious decision to be happy, it will change the way you see everything around you.

**See the good in the bad.** From missteps, look for opportunities. You haven't failed if you've learned something new.

Feeling happier can help you be more productive at work and improve your personal relationships.

## Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber



*Employee Enrichment is a weekly feature for CHFS staff. These tips for making work better focus on team building, customer service and personal development.*

Can making a decision to be happy really change our personal style and behavior? Yes, two authors claim.

Rick Foster and Greg Hicks, authors of "How We Choose to Be Happy: The Nine Choices of Extremely Happy People – Their Secrets, Their Stories," drove across the country interviewing happy people. They discovered several commonalities through their research.

According to Foster and Hicks, here are the top three secrets of happy people: